

Secrets to Surviving Life's Storms, Part 7 - Acts 27:31-38 – August 29th, 2010

- This is part seven of a series that I've entitled; "Secrets to Surviving Life's Storms," as we learn how Paul survives this perilous storm.
- The beloved Apostle is sort of rising from the pages of scripture and revealing to us the secrets to surviving the storms and trials of life.
- Here-to-for in verses 1-30, we've looked at 12 of these survival secrets, and today will pick it up with our 13th one beginning in verse 31.

13. Discernment (Verses 31-32)

31 Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

-v31 Paul says to the centurion and the soldiers that unless they stay in the ship, they cannot have any hope of being saved.

-v32 Luke tells us that in response to Paul's warning, the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

"...Paul saw through their cowardly purpose and prevented it. It is a shameful thing to leave others to perish while we can be of any service to them." Charles Spurgeon

- I find it interesting that Paul was the only one who, like Spurgeon says; "saw through them," and was on to them and their evil scheme.
- It's for this reason that I believe the Holy Spirit had Luke record this detail. It is so that we will learn - how important it is to discern.
- When we're in a trial, it is so vital that we exercise discernment and discern so we know whether or not it's spiritual warfare. (Prov 3:21-26)

14. Nourishment (Verses 33-38)

33 Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food-you haven't eaten anything. 34 Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." 35 After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. 36 They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 Altogether there were 276 of us on board. 38 When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

-v33 Paul encourages them to eat because for 14 days they've been seasick and on edge hanging on for their lives, and haven't eaten.

-v34 He urges them to eat food for nourishment or they won't survive, then he assures them no one will lose a single hair from his head.

-v35 After saying this, he takes some bread and gives thanks to God in front of all of them, then broke it and they all began to eat it.

-v36-38 They're all encouraged, all 276 of them, and they eat as much as they want then lighten the ship throwing the grain overboard.

- This is interesting because it's like Paul is saying; "come on guys, we've been through a lot and we all need to eat some 'comfort-food.'

"Picture this one brave man, in the dim twilight, standing in the midst of nearly three hundred haggard faces, speaking so calmly and giving them such sound advice. Faith ennobles believers, and makes them comforters of others. Such calm devotion spreads courage on all sides. If Paul, even in a storm, gave thanks, what shall be said of those persons who rush upon their meals like swine, and never thank the Lord who provides for them?" Charles Spurgeon

- Perhaps you'll be so kind as to indulge me for just a moment, as I've sensed from the Lord that this survival secret is underestimated.
- Here's what I'm thinking: notice in verse 34, Paul tells them that if they don't eat and nourish their bodies they will not survive the storm.
- In other words, our survival depends on our eating good for nourishment physically, and sleeping good, for discernment mentally.

- Now, let me hasten to say, that I am in no way, speaking about this - as one who is living this, for to do so would render me a hypocrite.

- Be that as it may, I believe that the detail we have recorded here in the text before us, serves as a lesson to us if we hope to survive.

- Don't underestimate the importance of physical and mental health, especially when under unspeakable stress while in the storms of life.

- Elijah is an example of this when he's physically fatigued, emotionally exhausted and doubtless, very sleep deprived and unhealthy.

- He's so unhealthy, in 1 Kings 19:5-8 the Lord has to just let him eat and sleep so he will have enough strength to survive what's ahead.

- That's essentially what Paul's says when he tells them they need nourishment to survive. Absent that they'll give way to total despair.

"Does someone hold the view that as long as you are a Christian it does not matter what the condition of your body is? Well, you will soon be disillusioned if you believe that. Physical conditions play their part in all this. ...temperament seems to some degree to be controlled by physical conditions and there are certain people who constitutionally, almost in a physical sense, are prone to this condition. In other words, there are certain physical ailments which tend to promote depression. ...take that great preacher who preached in London for nearly forty years ... – Charles Haddon Spurgeon – one of the truly great preachers of all time. That great man was subject to spiritual depression, and the main explanation in his case was undoubtedly the fact that he suffered from a gouty condition which finally killed him. He had to face this problem of spiritual depression often in a most acute form. ...there are many, I find, who come to talk to me about these matters, in whose case it seems quite clear to them that the cause of the trouble is mainly physical. Into this group, speaking generally, you can put tiredness, overstrain, and any form of illness. You cannot isolate the spiritual from the physical for we are body, mind and spirit. The greatest and the best Christians when they are physically weak are more prone to an attack of spiritual depression than at any other time and there are great illustrations of this in the Scriptures. You may be in this condition simply because you are working too hard physically. You can be tired in the work and not tired of the work. It is possible that a man has been over-working- I do not care in what realm, whether natural or spiritual-and has been over-taxing his energy and his physical resources. If you go on working too hard or under strain you are bound to suffer. And of course if that is the cause of the trouble, the remedy you need is medical treatment. There is a striking example of this in the Old Testament. ...when Elijah had that attack of spiritual depression after his heroic effort on Mount Carmel, he sat down under a juniper tree and felt sorry for himself. But the real thing he needed was sleep and food; and God gave him both! He gave him food and rest before He gave him spiritual help."

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones "Spiritual Depression, Its Causes and its Cure" pp. 18, 19, 196

Psalm 42:11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. KJV